

Cable, French Atlantic

Another bit of early Duxbury history which is not so well known concerns the laying of the cable extending from France to America, the North American end of which is in Duxbury.

The concession for laying and operating this cable was granted to Baron Emile d'Erlinger, of Paris, and Julius Reuter, of London, in 1868. by the French government, "and conveyed the right to run a cable from France to the United States, and to work it for twenty years, under the conditions that no soil other than the United States be touched by the cable in its transit, and the price of a despatch of twenty words not to exceed twenty dollars. The French government bound itself not to grant any other concessions for lines between those two countries during the period. The company was organized with a capital of \$6,000,000 and it is said that in less than eight days the subscription list was filled by the most reliable banking houses of Europe."

The company that had manufactured the Anglo-American cable received the contract for this one, and after much surveying had been done the course decided upon extended from Brest to the southern point of the Grand Bank, thence to the Isle of St. Pierre, and so down by Cape Breton Island and Nova Scotia to the coast of Massachusetts. The cable from Brest to St. Pierre measured 2,584 miles, and from St. Pierre to Duxbury, 749 miles. The labor of laying this cable was, in those days, a stupendous one. When it had been completed, the first message from these shores was sent to the Emperor Napoleon in France. The reply proved that the mechanism was in good order. Boston co-operated with Duxbury in celebrating this event. A large tent was erected on Abraham's Hill, and a dinner was served to 600.